



SEMANTIC FEATURES OF PROPER NOUNS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Annotation. This article investigates the functional and semantic features of proper nouns in English and Uzbek languages. Proper nouns are usually defined as linguistic units that identify unique persons, places, institutions, events, and other individual entities. Although they are traditionally considered naming units rather than meaning-bearing words, modern linguistic studies show that proper nouns also possess semantic, cultural, pragmatic, and stylistic significance. The article analyzes the main types of proper nouns, their semantic characteristics, and their communicative functions in English and Uzbek. Special attention is paid to anthroponyms, toponyms, ethnonyms, institutional names, and literary proper names. The study shows that proper nouns perform not only an identifying function but also cultural, expressive, social, symbolic, and text-forming functions. In both English and Uzbek, proper nouns reflect national worldview, historical memory, social values, religious beliefs, and cultural traditions.

Keywords: proper noun, onomastics, anthroponym, toponym, semantics, function, English, Uzbek, cultural meaning, naming system.

Proper nouns occupy a special place in the lexical system of every language. They are used to distinguish one individual object from others of the same class. Unlike common nouns, which name general classes of objects, proper nouns refer to unique entities: personal names, geographical names, names of organizations, historical events, literary characters, newspapers, brands, and other individual objects. For example, *London*, *William Shakespeare*, *Oxford University*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Tashkent*, *Alisher Navoiy*, and *Samarqand* are proper nouns because each of them identifies a specific entity.

The study of proper nouns belongs to the field of **onomastics**, a branch of linguistics that examines names, their origin, structure, meaning, and use. Proper nouns have been studied from different perspectives: semantic, grammatical, cultural, historical, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic. Earlier linguistic approaches often treated proper nouns as words with reference but without lexical meaning. However, modern linguistics pays more attention to the cultural, symbolic, and functional meaning of proper names.

In English and Uzbek, proper nouns are not only labels. They can show national identity, social status, religious belief, family tradition, geographical belonging, and cultural memory. For instance, Uzbek personal names such as *Ulug'bek*, *Dilnoza*, *Jasur*, *Mohinur*, and *Gulbahor* often contain positive meanings connected with beauty, courage, light, greatness, and nature. English names such as *Grace*, *Hope*, *Faith*, *Rose*, and *Victor* may also carry semantic associations related to moral values, religion, beauty, or success.

The relevance of this topic is explained by the fact that proper nouns are widely used in everyday speech, literature, translation, media discourse, education, and intercultural communication. Their correct interpretation is especially important in translation studies because proper nouns may contain culture-specific meanings that cannot always be translated



literally. Therefore, the functional and semantic analysis of proper nouns helps to understand not only linguistic structure but also the cultural worldview of a nation.

The problem of proper nouns has attracted the attention of many linguists and philosophers. J. S. Mill considered proper names mainly as signs that denote individuals but do not describe their qualities. Later, this idea was developed and criticized by different scholars. S. Kripke studied proper names from the perspective of reference and argued that names are closely connected with the act of naming and social usage. J. Lyons analyzed proper nouns as linguistic units that have a special relationship between form, meaning, and reference. W. Van Langendonck emphasized that proper names are not semantically empty because they may include associative, social, cultural, and pragmatic meaning.

In Uzbek linguistics, proper nouns have also been studied within onomastics, lexicology, and stylistics. Uzbek scholars have paid attention to anthroponyms, toponyms, ethnonyms, historical names, and literary proper nouns. Uzbek naming traditions are closely connected with religion, family values, nature, historical personalities, and national culture. Therefore, the study of proper nouns in Uzbek requires not only linguistic but also cultural and historical analysis.

From the contrastive point of view, English and Uzbek proper nouns have both universal and specific features. In both languages, proper nouns identify individual objects and are usually capitalized in writing. However, their formation, cultural motivation, semantic associations, and stylistic use may differ. English naming traditions are influenced by Germanic, Latin, French, Biblical, and modern global elements¹, while Uzbek names are influenced by Turkic, Persian-Arabic, Islamic, and national cultural traditions.

The article uses descriptive, semantic, comparative, and functional methods of analysis. The descriptive method is used to explain the general linguistic nature of proper nouns. The semantic method helps to identify the meaning and associative content of names. The comparative method is applied to reveal similarities and differences between English and Uzbek proper nouns. The functional method is used to determine the role of proper nouns in communication, literature, social interaction, and cultural representation.

Examples are taken from English and Uzbek personal names, place names, institutional names, literary texts, and everyday language use.

A proper noun is a word or word combination used to name a particular person, place, organization, object, event, or phenomenon. Proper nouns differ from common nouns because they individualize rather than generalize. For example, the word *city* is a common noun, while *London* and *Tashkent* are proper nouns. The word *poet* is a common noun, while *William Wordsworth* and *Alisher Navoiy* are proper nouns.

Proper nouns usually have the following features:

1. They identify a unique object.
2. They are written with a capital letter.
3. They often do not take articles in English, although there are exceptions.
4. They may preserve historical, cultural, and social information.
5. They can function as symbols in literary and cultural texts.

In English, proper nouns include names such as *John*, *Mary*, *America*, *The Times*, *Harvard University*, and *Christmas*. In Uzbek, examples include *Aziza*, *Javlon*, *Qarshi*, *O'zbekiston*, *Toshkent davlat universiteti*, and *Navro'z*.

¹ Coates, R. "Properhood." *Language*, 2006, Vol. 82, No. 2, p. 356.

Although proper nouns are often described as words with only referential meaning, in real communication they frequently carry additional semantic and cultural associations. For example, the name *Shakespeare* does not simply denote a historical person; it also symbolizes English literature, genius, drama, and cultural heritage. Similarly, *Alisher Navoiy* in Uzbek culture represents poetry, wisdom, classical literature, and national pride.

The semantic nature of proper nouns is complex. On the one hand, proper nouns identify individual objects. On the other hand, they may contain lexical, associative, cultural, symbolic, and emotional meanings.

The main semantic function of proper nouns is reference. They point to a particular person, place, object, or institution. For example:

- ✓ *Oxford* refers to a specific city and university center in England.
- ✓ *Samarqand* refers to a specific historical city in Uzbekistan.
- ✓ *Charles Dickens* refers to a particular English writer.
- ✓ *Abdulla Qodiriy* refers to a particular Uzbek writer.

In this sense, proper nouns serve as linguistic markers of individuality. Without proper nouns, communication would become less precise because speakers would need to describe each person or place in detail.

Many proper nouns have an original lexical meaning. This meaning may be transparent or hidden. For example, the English name *Grace* means elegance, kindness, or divine blessing. The name *Rose* is connected with the flower. The name *Victor* means winner or conqueror.

In Uzbek, many names have clear semantic motivation:

- ✓ *Jasur* - brave, courageous;
- ✓ *Dilnoza* - delicate or charming heart;
- ✓ *Mohinur* - moonlight;
- ✓ *Gulbahor* - spring flower;
- ✓ *Ulug'bek* - great ruler or noble person;
- ✓ *Sardor* - leader.

Such names show that proper nouns may contain positive wishes, moral ideals, aesthetic values, or cultural expectations. Parents often choose names according to their hopes for the child's future. Therefore, personal names are not random linguistic signs; they are connected with social psychology and cultural values.

Proper nouns often reflect cultural identity. In English-speaking countries, many personal names have Biblical, royal, literary, or historical origins: *John*, *Mary*, *Elizabeth*, *George*, *Victoria*, *Arthur*. These names may evoke religious, historical, or national associations.

In Uzbek culture, many names are connected with Islamic tradition, Persian-Arabic vocabulary, Turkic roots, nature, beauty, strength, and family wishes. Names such as *Abdulloh*, *Muhammad*, *Fotima*, *Zaynab*, *Oybek*, *Gulnora*, *Bahodir*, and *Shahnoza* reflect religious, historical, and cultural layers of Uzbek naming traditions.

Toponyms also carry cultural meaning. For instance, *Samarqand*, *Buxoro*, and *Xiva* are not only geographical names; they also represent ancient civilization, Islamic architecture, trade, science, and cultural heritage. Similarly, *London*, *Cambridge*, and *Stratford-upon-Avon* carry strong cultural associations in English.

Some proper nouns become symbols beyond their original referential meaning. For example, *Waterloo* may symbolize defeat; *Hollywood* symbolizes the film industry; *Wall*



*Street*² symbolizes finance and capitalism. In Uzbek, *Amir Temur* symbolizes power, statehood, and historical greatness; *Navro'z* symbolizes renewal, spring, and national tradition.

In literature, proper nouns often acquire symbolic meaning. For instance, *Gatsby* in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* symbolizes the American dream, wealth, illusion, and spiritual emptiness. In Uzbek literature, names such as *Otabek* and *Kumush* in Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* are associated with national character, love, tragedy, and social change.

Proper nouns perform several important functions in language and communication. The primary function of proper nouns is to identify. They help speakers and listeners distinguish one object from another. For example, when we say *Tashkent*, we refer to a definite city, not to any city in general. When we say *William Shakespeare*, we refer to one specific writer, not to all playwrights.

This function is especially important in official documents, education, law, administration, science, and media. Names of people, institutions, countries, books, and events provide precision and clarity.

Proper nouns differentiate individuals within the same group. For example, in a classroom, names such as *Maftuna*, *Madina*, *Aziz*, and *Javohir* help distinguish students from one another. In geography, *London*, *Manchester*, and *Liverpool* distinguish different cities in England. In Uzbek geography, *Qarshi*, *Termiz*, *Samarqand*, and *Toshkent* identify different places. The differentiating function is essential for social organization because names allow people to classify and organize reality.

Proper nouns preserve cultural memory. Names of historical figures, places, events, and literary characters transmit information from generation to generation. For example, the names *Alisher Navoiy*, *Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur*, *Amir Temur*, and *Jaloliddin Manguberdi*³ are important in Uzbek cultural consciousness. They remind people of history, literature, bravery, and statehood.

In English culture, names such as *Shakespeare*, *Queen Elizabeth I*, *Charles Dickens*, *Newton*, and *Churchill* perform a similar function. They represent cultural and historical memory.

Proper nouns can show social identity, family background, religion, nationality, and even generation. Surnames, patronymics, titles, and honorifics are important in social communication.

In Uzbek, names may be used with respect markers such as *aka*, *opa*, *domla*, *ustoz*, *xonim*, and *janob*. For example, *Maftuna opa*, or *Mirsanov ustoz* show respect and social relationship. In English, titles such as *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Dr.*, *Professor*, and *Sir* perform similar functions. Thus, proper nouns are not only linguistic units but also social signs.

In literary texts, proper nouns are often used for stylistic effect. Writers choose names carefully to reflect character, social background, personality, or symbolic meaning. For example, Charles Dickens often used expressive names that reflected character traits. In Uzbek literature, names may also be selected to show beauty, tragedy, morality, or social position.

² Van Langendonck, W. *Theory and Typology of Proper Names*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007. p. 67.

³ Mahmudov, N., Nurmonov, A. *O'zbek tilining nazariy grammatikasi*. Toshkent: O'qituvchi, 2000. B-125.



Proper nouns may create historical atmosphere in a text. A novel with names such as *Otabek*, *Kumush*, *Yusufbek hoji*, and *Zaynab* immediately evokes Uzbek cultural and historical context. Similarly, names such as *Elizabeth Bennet*, *Mr. Darcy*, and *Jane Eyre* create associations with English literary tradition.

Proper nouns may express emotional attitude. In everyday speech, people may use full names, shortened names, affectionate forms, or respectful forms depending on their relationship. For example, English names may have shortened forms: *William* - *Will/Bill*, *Elizabeth* - *Liz/Beth*, *Katherine* - *Kate*⁴. Uzbek names may have affectionate or respectful forms: *Aziza* - *Azizaxon*, *Dilnoza* - *Dilnozaxon*, *Jasur* - *Jasurbek*, *Maftuna* - *Maftunaxon*. These forms show closeness, respect, affection, or social distance. Therefore, proper nouns have pragmatic value in communication.

Proper nouns can be classified into several groups according to the type of object they name.

English and Uzbek proper nouns have several common features. In both languages, they are used to identify unique objects and are written with capital letters. Both languages have personal names, place names, institutional names, literary names, and event names. Proper nouns in both languages may carry cultural, symbolic, and emotional meanings.

However, there are also important differences.

First, Uzbek personal names often have transparent lexical meaning. Many Uzbek names are formed from words denoting beauty, courage, light, flowers, happiness, or religious concepts. For example, *Gulnoza*, *Mohinur*, *Baxtiyor*, *Jasur*, and *Iroda* have clear positive meanings. English names may also have meanings, but in many cases their original meanings are less obvious to ordinary speakers.

Second, Uzbek naming culture frequently uses suffix-like respectful or gender-related elements such as *-bek*, *-jon*, *-xon*, *-oy*, and *-gul*⁵. For example: *Oybek*, *Javlonbek*, *Dilshodjon*, *Gulbahor*, *Oyxon*. These elements add cultural and emotional meaning. English names usually do not have such productive cultural components, although diminutive forms exist.

Third, English proper nouns may be used with articles in some cases: the United States, the United Kingdom, the Thames, the Times. Uzbek proper nouns usually do not require articles because the Uzbek language has no article system.

Fourth, transliteration and translation of proper nouns create specific problems. English names are usually transliterated into Uzbek: *Shakespeare* - *Shekspir*, *London* - *London*, *Charles Dickens* - *Charlz Dikkens*. Uzbek names are also transliterated into English: *Toshkent* - *Tashkent*, *Samarqand* - *Samarkand*, *Alisher Navoiy* - *Alisher Navoi*. However, some culturally meaningful names may require explanation in translation because their semantic associations may be lost.

The analysis shows that proper nouns should not be understood as simple labels. They are complex linguistic units with referential, semantic, cultural, pragmatic, and stylistic features. Their meaning depends on linguistic form, historical origin, cultural context, and communicative situation.

⁴ Crystal, D. A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics. 6th ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. P-87.

⁵ Dusmurodovna E. M. et al. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES AND THEIR FUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION IN MODERN LINGUISTICS //Academicus Journal of Research. – 2026. – T. 1. – №. 3. – C. 214-221.



In English and Uzbek, proper nouns perform similar basic functions, especially identification and differentiation. However, the semantic motivation of names is often more visible in Uzbek because many names are formed from meaningful lexical elements. Uzbek proper nouns frequently reflect wishes, beauty, moral qualities, religious beliefs, and national values. English proper nouns also have cultural depth, but their original meanings are sometimes less transparent due to historical changes and borrowing from different languages.

Proper nouns are especially important in translation. Translators must decide whether to preserve, transliterate, translate, or explain a proper noun. For example, personal names are usually transliterated, while names with symbolic meaning in literature may require additional interpretation. Geographical names often have established equivalents, but historical and cultural names may demand careful contextual treatment. Thus, the functional-semantic study of proper nouns is significant for linguistics, translation studies, cultural studies, lexicography, and language teaching.

Conclusion

Proper nouns are an essential part of the lexical system of English and Uzbek languages. They identify unique persons, places, institutions, events, and cultural objects. At the same time, they carry semantic, cultural, social, emotional, and symbolic meanings. The functional analysis shows that proper nouns perform identifying, differentiating, cultural, social, stylistic, emotional, and text-forming functions.

The semantic analysis proves that proper nouns are not empty linguistic signs. They may contain etymological meaning, cultural associations, historical memory, and pragmatic value. In English and Uzbek, proper nouns share universal features, but they also reflect specific national traditions. Uzbek proper nouns are often semantically transparent and culturally motivated, while English proper nouns show strong historical, Biblical, literary, and social influences.

The study of proper nouns is important for understanding the relationship between language, culture, and identity. It is also useful for translation, teaching, lexicography, literary analysis, and intercultural communication. Therefore, proper nouns should be studied not only as grammatical units but also as meaningful elements of national and cultural worldview.

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